

# **City of Fairfax**

## **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB)**

### **Meeting Minutes – March 13, 2014**

**PRAB Members Present:** Jane Albro, Brian Knapp, Harry Wilbur, Kirk Holley, Mike Slawski, Toby Sorensen, Bob Reinsel, Jennifer Passey, Evie Ifantides

**Members Absent:** Douglas Stewart, Jeff Ferrell, Zinta Rodgers-Rickert, Esther Nasjleti

**Commission on the Arts Representatives:** Armistice Turtosa, Jeff Seffens, Randolph Lytton, Molly Grimsley, Howard Rhile

**Guest Present:** Patrick Hoagland, Katie Prassel

**City Staff Present:** Michael McCarty, Director of Parks & Recreation  
Eric Forman, Community Development and Planning  
Joanna Ormesher, Cultural Tourism & Marketing Manager  
Stacy Sanders, Special Projects Manager  
Mitzi Taylor, Event Coordinator

**Call to Order:** Chairman Knapp called the meeting to order at 7:08pm

#### **Joint Discussion with Commission on the Arts**

- Strategic Planning Process Update – Chairman Knapp discussed
  - Phase 1 of the strategic planning process-
    - Phase 1 started in April 2013 through October 2013
    - It was all about the citizens
    - A steering committee was created
    - Heard a good cross section of the city – thru workshops, stakeholders meetings and surveys
  - Phase 2 of the strategic planning–
    - We are in the middle of the Phase 2 process
    - The goals are to answer the WHO, WHERE, WHEN, and HOW
    - June 24 is now the new date the Strategic Plan will be presented before City Council
    - The building housing Paul VI may become vacant – what will happen? We hope the city takes over the building for several reasons:
      1. Pat Rodio Park – shared parking with Paul VI
      2. The building has a lot to offer – gym, theater, rooms for classes
    - Armistice Turtosa announced she would like to see the City have a community theater & swimming pool
- **Discuss relationship between Strategic Planning & the COA Goals & Objectives**
  - Chairman Seffens spoke about basic statistics on Cultural Arts (see hand out):
    - Strives to encourage diversity thru COA
    - Promote Young Artists
      - Joan Cross Memorial Award

- Sherwood Choral Award
- Develop a cost recovery program:
  - Fund raising and sponsorships to bring money in
- Increase the awareness of cultural arts
  - Public art policy – approved by Council in February
  - Value of cultural arts
    - Enriching the quality of life of the city resident
  - Most important facet
    - Providing variety of programs/activities for all ages
    - Reaching out & unifying community around arts
  - Create partnerships to improve cultural arts: (public art policy page 4)
    - City boards/commission and schools
    - GMU and local businesses
  - Next 10 years
    - Harry Wilbur would like to see a Community Theater & Cultural Arts Director full-time position
    - Armistice reiterated she would like a community theater
- Need more money & funding
  - Increase grant amounts & numbers
  - Public Art
  - Advertising
  - Challenges - money
- Work to place public art & performance space in Public parks
  - Bob Reinsel inquired whether the current space is being fully utilized even though it is small. Chairman Seffens responded – venues are full
  - Chairman Knapp – suggested GMU as a venue – that venue has not been used
  - Obstacle in having a better relationship with GMU
    - GMU music students to perform at OTH
  - Michael McCarty commented - what is meant by small? –
  - Chairman Seffens responded – stage size but also look at audience size
  - How should P&R plan incorporate COA plan?
    - Place public art in parks and trails
    - Kirk Holley asked if the public art has a specific destination area or will it be spread out?
    - Work with P & R on Old Town Square
  - Kirk Holley asked – revenue opportunity? Donors, fundraising activity, and performances
  - Bob Reinsel suggested approaching a commercial space for the city – example: Birchmire does well in Alexandria maybe they would like to partner with the city
- Priorities for 5-10 years
  - Turning an office building into a theater in Old Town
  - Very expensive
  - Where would a theater be built? – old Amoco lot

#### **New Business:**

- **Park Naming Discussion**

- School Street Site
  - PRAB voted on keeping School Street the name of the park off of School Street – the name was approved unanimously
- Down Town Park Site
  - No decisions made about the name – PRAB turned in voting sheets
  - Staff recommended the name “Patriot Square” for the park behind Old Town Hall
  - Toby Sorensen prefers “Kitty Pozer” be the chosen name for the park
  - Toby Sorensen commented that we have no parks named after women
  - Harry Wilbur didn’t want a name related to George Mason University
  - Kirk Holley thinks the park should have a generalized name like Patriot Square or Fairfax City Commons.
  - Bob Reinsel preferred the park not to be named after an individual
- **Overview of COF Demographic and Development Trends**
  - Presentation made by Eric Forman – see attached Power Point document
- **Department Budget Submission:**
  - Michael McCarty informed PRAB that the P&R budget presentation is on Tuesday at 7:30pm
  - Key for COA – Fall for the Book the funding for Commission on the Arts and City Band are included in the budget proposal at the FY2014 levels
  - Not public meeting just a work session
  - Scheduled for 30 minutes

#### **Old Business:**

##### **1. Trails Subcommittee**

1. Joseph Harmon unanimously approved to be appointed to the Trails Sub-committee
  - Bob Reinsel made the motion and seconded by Evie Ifantides

##### **2. Strategic Master Plan**

- Community Development and Planning Demographic Brief – presented by Eric Forman
  - 1. Facility Resources**
    - **Park Locations**
      - Kirk Holley mentioned multi-purpose fields. Discussed rectangular sports play and diamond fields.
      - Draper Drive Park – 4 sport purpose
      - Also noted that the SW quadrant has no Green Space
      - Toby Sorensen brought up the property at 9999 Main St and how it has been left to the City via a will.
      - Chairman Knapp mentioned that Westmore is not a new park, but a park to be developed.
    - **Parks and Playgrounds – Regarding the maps provided by Pat Hoagland**
      - Referring to the layout of the maps from Pat Hoagland, regarding school playgrounds and neighborhood playgrounds, it was asked if we should include them in our study. We do not maintain Cambridge Station, so should we add it as a park in the study? Should every playground have the same size bubble? There are massive amounts of equipment in small parks. Michael McCarty suggested we not include school playgrounds and tot lots.

- Bob Reinsel agrees that neighborhood and tot lot parks, as well as civic association parks, should not be included in our plan.
- Toby Sorensen stated differently saying that School parks are used during non-school hours.
- Kirk Holley – in looking at the service area maps was interested to know the nature of the visitor. He would like to know if we have the same number of parks per capita as surrounding jurisdictions. In relation to shelters, Bob Reinsel asked where the shelter was at Country Club Hills Park. Not a ½ mile he said because you can't walk directly to it. You have to go around neighborhoods. It's cut off by private business or residences.
- Michael McCarty suggested that by having rectangular fields have a greater distance than a ½ mile they are drawing from the county and region for sporting activities. Michael McCarty suggested that that the consultants look at increasing the radius.
- Kirk Holley stated that the parks classification needs to be defined and then that would determine the way to map their radius
- Harry Wilbur mentioned that he spoke to three mothers at Ratcliff and they said they had come from outside the City.

## **2. Trends**

- Chairman Knapp mentioned he was trying to appreciate the context, and said he saw a great value in national trends, but asked how this relates to the City. He mentioned indoor family activities, but no mention of Green Acres. Every trend needs to support the recommendations.
- Katie Prasser– they would stay with trends tied to the City of Fairfax.
- Pat Hoagland– Discussion of individual parks and facilities
- Chairman Knapp brought up the discussion on skate parks. He stated how with current trends they are no longer fenced in and have taken on a different form.
- Michael McCarty suggested that we correlate local trends
- Chairman Knapp discussed nature education having high response, but we are not building a nature center. We can focus on what we do have. This need could be met by partners
- Kirk Holley – trends going opposite way. Baseball fields down 20% over ten years, so important not to build diamonds, but hiking up 50%.

## **3. Benchmarking**

- Chairman Knapp asked how this helped us.
- Pat Hoagland responded with trying to show where the City of Fairfax is behind.
- Bob Reinsel asked if it was our intention to compete with other communities with our same population or by park size.
- Michael McCarty mentioned we are listed as Gold Medal standard. What is our standard? He told Pat we should get specific data points to reference our benchmarking.
- Chairman Knapp noted discrepancies and asked that staff review.
- There was agreement that PRAB would like to achieve the Gold Medal Standard and that that needs to be defined in the plan.

## **4. Draft Program Analysis**

- Chairman Knapp said it did not capture FPYC and other partners. GMU, Little League, NVPRA and FCPA
- Jane Albrow mentioned that there were programs from Green Acres not listed.

- Katie Prasser – we focused on the gaps, and we found there was a gap in nature centers she said. The national trend is much higher than what the City offers. The City has a gap, but it could be met by going to a surrounding jurisdiction.
- Chairman Knapp asked where the deficiencies were. He asked if they were in Special Events.
- To answer Chairman Knapp, Katie Prasser said they were in the user fees. Katie discussed the differences of the cost recovery rates between the City of Fairfax and other surrounding jurisdictions.

## 5. **Summary Points**

- Pat mentioned that he and Katie are now working on the “guts” of the plan. He also mentioned they were working through strategies and a timeline.
- Katie Prasser– After April 10 we go back and tell the story and package for final product. They said they were currently working all that out.
- Michael McCarty asked if prior to that will the group see the document or would the first time be at the meeting. Katie Prasser mentioned PRAB would see it in advance.
- Harry Wilbur brought up a caution and added that there was so much going on he was afraid there is a danger that things could get lost with Council. He suggested that the maps be in an appendix.
- Indoor Recreation – will have a discussion at April meeting
- **Department Report**
  - Julie Miles – new Community Programs Coordinator
  - Camp numbers are up – Sunshine Kids Camp full
  - Ashby Pond project
  - Turf blankets were removed at Lanier -FPYC will play on them starting next week
- **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
  - Minutes from PRAB meeting February 2014 were approved as presented. Bob Reinsel made the motion and seconded by Evie Ifantides
  - Minutes from Joint Meeting with Senior Center meeting March 14, 2014 were approved as presented. Evie Ifantides made the motion and seconded by Bob Reinsel
- **Stakeholder Updates**
  - School Board – Toby Sorensen – nothing to report
  - Planning Commission – Jennifer Passey– nothing to report
  - Senior Center – Jane Albro
    - Antique Appraisal Show – Sherwood – March 22
    - Monday – St. Patty’s pot luck
    - A meeting is scheduled with Mike McCarty & Stacy Sanders on Friday (March 14) at noon regarding Strategic Planning
  - Community Appearance Committee – Kirk Holley reported
    - Drafting report – done in 30 days – this report has not been done in a while–
    - Will hold a Joint presentation with the Planning Commission
  - Commission on the Arts – Harry Wilbur – nothing to report
  - NVRPA – Brian Knapp– nothing to report
- **Matter of the Members**
  - All pass

**Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:22pm

**The next PRAB meeting will take place:** Thursday, April 10, 2014

**Minutes prepared by:** Mitzi Taylor, Event Coordinator